

THE MAUI NEWS

Entered at the Post Office at Walluku, Maui, Hawaii, as second-class matter.

A Republican Paper Published in the Interest of the People

Issued Every Friday.

MAUI PUBLISHING COMPANY, LIMITED,
Proprietors and Publishers

SUBSCRIPTION RATES, \$2.50 PER YEAR IN ADVANCE.

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FRIDAY, : : : SEPTEMBER 10, 1915.

ANOTHER HOMESTEAD FAILURE?

Are the Kuiaha homesteads to be added to the list of Hawaii's homestead failures? There are persons who believe they are, and certainly from what the homesteaders have to show in tangible results for their expenditures and three years of effort, this belief may seem well founded. At the present time perhaps a third of the original settlers have proved up and have left their lots, and others are preparing to do likewise. Already this most promising and attractive of rural communities in the territory is badly broken up. The regular semi-monthly church services have been discontinued because there are no longer people enough to justify holding them. The school attendance has dropped by one half.

It is true that the homesteaders who have left have not sold their lands; but this is probably due to the fact that they could probably not sell for sufficient to break even. However, it is also doubtless true that sentiment and the hope that the future may hold something better than the past has held, has a part in this loathness to cut entirely loose and start all over. The fact that most of the homesteaders in the Kuiaha tract, pinning their faith to pineapples, have lost heavily, has certainly warranted discouragement, and with pineapples still a very uncertain quantity for the future, and nothing definite to take the place, it is not to be wondered at if many have been forced to leave and hunt more remunerative work.

But there are still some who have not given up the fight as hopeless, and who refuse to believe that they shall not ultimately find something that they can raise at a profit. The soil is undeniably good, the location could scarcely be improved upon, with good shipping facilities, and now with a system of very fair roads. A good many things have been grown on a small scale successfully, though so far no staple crop, for which a reasonably certain market may be had, has been found. These problems are being vigorously attacked by the federal experiment station and the Territorial marketing division, and there is certainly reason to believe that ultimately they will be able to demonstrate the feasibility of small farming in Hawaii. The experiment station has had for the past year a trained agriculturist on the ground, working along the most practical lines possible, and progress is being made. Especially is this true in the problem of feeding live stock, which has already been partially solved. Hog raising is being tried on a small scale, and soon an experiment in "baby beef," as the raising of high grade, hand fed beef cattle is known, is to be tried. Fruit has been planted which holds out promise for the future. In fact there are many things that a real farmer should see most encouraging in Haiku as it is at present. And perhaps this is the key to the situation—there have not been enough real farmers in the community, and too many amateurs.

PUBLICITY THE PANACEA.

Not without good reason has Kauai always been held up as a shining example to the other counties in the matter of county government. And not without justification has Kauai taken pride in the fact. The Garden Island has good roads that probably cost her less for construction and maintenance than do those of any other county. She has had the same county engineer for years. Her supervisors handle the business of the county with apparently a minimum of friction, and the people of the Island are apparently well satisfied with their stewardship.

And now comes Editor Timmons, of the Garden Island, with an explanation of this pleasant phenomenon. It is largely due, he says, to the policy of publicity which has always been encouraged in matters of county government. The proceedings of the board of supervisors at all meetings is published in full—and paid for. Everybody in the county therefore knows all the details of the county business, all of the time, and understands them. This one thing, Editor Timmons says, is worth thousands of dollars to the county and the people. It forestalls suspicion and nullifies any occasion for criticism.

There is much truth in the suggestion. With such a system in practice on Hawaii, it seems scarcely possible that the notorious grafting and thievery of a few years ago could have occurred. Maui has not suffered in the same way, but she has not escaped the reproach of some exceedingly foolish and expensive blunders in the past, that would have in all likelihood been avoided had the details of what the supervisors were doing been known. And the men who made the blunders were not criminals. They simply made mistakes. And the people of Maui were in equal measure responsible for these mistakes as were the men who made them. It was their business to have an interest in public affairs, and to not sit blindly by until mistakes were made which their knowledge and interest would most certainly have prevented.

The men who are serving the people as supervisors have a right to demand the intelligent cooperation of every good citizen, for no government by the people can be efficient unless the people are intelligently alive to what is going on. Nor is there a better way to gain this interest than through the broadest kind of publicity. It isn't sufficient simply to say that the meetings are open. No one has time to spend from four to six days per month attending meetings. Kauai's idea of publishing the details of meetings is not new—many towns and cities on the mainland have long done the same thing—but it is an innovation as far as this territory is concerned, and a mighty good one.

The news contained in this morning's wireless that the Northern Pacific Railroad Company has practically decided to put its splendid passenger liner "Great Northern" on the San Francisco-Honolulu run, is the best news that these islands have received in a long time. The "Great Northern" is not only one of the largest and fastest vessels in the Pacific, but the company that owns it is one of the most aggressive in matters of business in the United States. If it really enters the local trade there is little doubt that Hawaii will be advertised on the mainland as has never been done before, especially in the great northwest, where thousands of persons annually spend the winter months in more congenial climes. It will be almost criminal if Hawaii does or neglects to do anything in reason that may defeat the plans now on foot.

While it wouldn't be the best road on Maui, it would be a comparatively simple and inexpensive matter to make the trail from Kailua to Keanae passable to vehicle travel. The grade of the present trail is good, permanent concrete bridges are in place, and the expenditure of a few thousand dollars would make it as practicable as the present road from Waihee to Kahakua, which is in constant use and is infinitely better than no road at all. Besides this would be a step towards establishing a road connection clear through to Hana—something that must be done sooner or later.

High Sheriff Jarrett and the county supervisors of Hawaii are at loggerheads over the territorial prisoners working on the volcano road. The last word from the Big Island is that Jarrett is to be asked to take the men back to Honolulu. Here's another good chance to add to the force needed to build the Haleakala road.

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